



JULY  
1993

# NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

THE OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 1019, Independence, MO 64051-0519 Phone and FAX 816-252-2276

## Board Approves Fund Raising Plan

by Jim Budde, Chair  
Revenue Task Force

The Board of Directors approved a fund raising plan at the March, 1993, Mid-Year Meeting in Independence. The Revenue Enhancement Plan (REP) which was presented by Treasurer Jim Budde resulted from a year-long study by the Revenue Task Force and should go a long way toward enhancing OCTA's fiscal stability. The Officers and Board of Directors have spent a considerable portion of their deliberative time seeking ways to achieve a reasonable degree of fiscal stability during most of our first decade. Thanks to their efforts and sacrifices of the membership we have entered our second decade of existence as the premier historic trails preservation group. Having achieved this we now must move on to greater challenges.

A cursory review of our most recent financial statement (published in the January, 1993, NFP) demonstrates that we have emerged from the recurring

fiscal crisis that plagued us during the 1980s. Our paid memberships are approaching 2300 and we should generate about \$110,000 in revenues during this fiscal year. Almost two-thirds of this revenue is derived from membership dues with the balance being derived from the merchandise sales, the annual convention and other miscellaneous income (interest, donations). On the expense side, we spend virtually every cent we take in. Our single biggest expense goes to support our flagship publications (the OJ and NFP) which are aggravated by a seemingly endless rise in postal rates and printing costs. The next biggest expense results from the cost of maintaining our headquarters office. Approximately 10% of our annual revenue is spent directly on trail-related preservation,

In addition, we have accumulated approximately \$35,000 from life memberships (plus in-

terest) which our founders wisely stipulated should be placed in escrow for some future emergency.

All things considered, OCTA has achieved a fair degree of fiscal stability at the end of our first decade. However, we cannot rest on our laurels. Our immediate danger is not a critical shortage of funds to meet or daily obligations, but a paralysis and complacency that might prevent us from undertaking new responsibilities and obligations to ensure

continued on next page • • • •



Who is this emigrant lady? Come to Baker City and see her in person.

### --- IMPORTANT NOTICE ---

The COED database is now open to OCTA members ONLY! See pages 18 and 19 to order a search.

NEXT NFP DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 1

NFP July 1993 - page 1

our continued existence and future growth. Although OCTA has accomplished a great deal, we all know that much work remains to be done. If we are to fulfill and succeed in our commitment to preserve and protect the emigrant trails, it is unlikely that we will do so without increased revenues.

The fund raising plan that is being presented to you is primarily directed to the members of OCTA. We recognize that there are other potential sources of revenue outside of the OCTA membership, but we have also recognized that the limitations of currently available person power and the need for highly specialized skills (grant-writing, direct calls on foundations, corporation, etc.) inhibit our ability to respond to these external sources at this time. Although the proposed plan is not as comprehensive as we had hoped for, we need to start somewhere and we can add to or modify it as we gain experience or as additional resources become available.

The Revenue Enhancement Plan (REP) would consist of three basic funds as follows:

#### Endowment Fund

The cornerstone of this fund (formerly the Life Membership Fund) would be the \$35,000 that has been raised over the years and set aside by the Board since the early days of OCTA. Future life memberships and accrued interest would continue to be added to this fund. Additional contributions would be encouraged on both a short-term (annual) and long-term (estate planning). Our goal would be to double the fund assets within several years and with a little luck and some larger donations we could hit \$100,000 within a few years. Why would OCTA need \$100,000 or so in this fund? The primary reason for this fund is to provide a short-term safety net (in the event of an emergency-type situation) and provide some degree of long-term financial stability. The Board of Directors has affirmed that this fund is untouchable except for some momentous crisis that could threaten OCTA's existence. This fund would continue to build indefinitely and at some point (say \$500,000)

the Board might decide to tap the interest (not the principal) to supplement the annual budget or for a special project.

#### Annual Fund

This NEW fund would be an annualized drive in which members would be encouraged to include OCTA on their list of favorite worthy causes or charities. A modest goal of 10% of the annual budget does not seem outlandish (\$12,300 in FY92-93). These funds would be solicited from a membership mailing and be used to offset current administrative expenses or to satisfy some unexpected or one-time special need which seems to crop up unexpectedly almost every year (i.e., membership brochures, insurance).

#### Designated Funds

This NEW fund would consist of a number of separate accounts (Trail Preservation, Archaeology, Graves & Sites/Trail Marking, COED, Trail Mapping, Special Publications and Education). Contributions to these funds would be open to anyone, but may be of particular interest to those individuals who want to support a particular OCTA program or who have worked on a specific project and wish to fulfill an unmet or special need. The donor would be able to specify one or more of the individual accounts and contributions to that fund would be designated (i.e., used only for projects in that category within a certain time frame). The designated funds could be used to underwrite a portion of the annual budget for that fund at the Board's discretion. Budgetary allocations and use of the designated funds for specific projects would have to be approved at the time the Board approves the budget.

These three funds will form the centerpiece of our fund raising program. Other funds could be added in response to specific cause (i.e., legal defense, land purchase, matching grants, memorials). Ideally, we would prefer cash contributions, but we would be willing to accept and encourage alternate forms of giving. Some of the alternate forms would include life insurance, appreci-

ated securities, personal property, real estate. We encourage you to include OCTA in your future giving (i.e., include OCTA in your will). More details on these alternate mechanisms are being developed and will be provided to the membership from time to time.

OCTA is surviving financially, but our current level of funding will not enable us to even think about an executive director during the next few years (if then). In addition, while we have a temporary home (courtesy of the City of Independence - estimated value \$25,000/year), what would happen if this arrangement was no longer available?

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find an article on the Emigrant Trails Historical Studies Series which is one of our newest publication programs and which could be the beneficiary of your contributions. The programs we developed early in our history are starting to come to fruition (i.e., COED) while some of the older programs (i.e., trail marking) will require increased cash infusions in the years to come.

Our immediate need for funds is not critical, but we will limp into the future unless and until we establish a mechanism to generate additional revenues and to convince ourselves that annual dues may enable us to survive, but not to grow. If we don't grow, then some portion of the Preservation burden which we have assumed may be lost. Can we afford to lose anymore of our heritage? I think not!

#### NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

is published quarterly by the Oregon-California Trails Association, P.O. Box 1019, Independence, MO 64051-0519.

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Rose Ann Tompkins, Editor

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

What a thrill to see the attention the Oregon Trail is getting this year! This is true not only of the media, but cities and counties all along the trail are planning celebrations. The Kansas City Star just featured a month-long series of articles on the Oregon Trail which included not only some good diary research, but comments from many OCTA members as well. Coupled with National Trails Day events, the Old Trail is having a good year!

I had the privilege of addressing the Morris Carter wagon train early this month as it left Missouri heading for Oregon. The Carter family are good ambassadors for the trail, and perhaps many of you will get to meet them on their way west this summer.

The Denver office of the National Park Service has received the assignment of coordinating the NPS responsibilities for the California Trail and the Pony Express Trails that are now officially National Historic Trails.

I have talked with Mike Duwe, and I am sure OCTA will have an opportunity to play a key role in the management of the California Trail.

Our mid-year board of directors meeting in Independence March 27 was a very productive one. Three very important milestones were reached. First of all, COED has now over 1000 diaries in their data base and are ready to receive a limited number of inquiries. I am astounded at the rapid progress they have made. Secondly, the Publications Committee

under the leadership of Don Buck is now ready to launch The Emigrant Trails Historic Studies Series with Susan Doyle as General Editor. In addition the Charles True Diary reprint should be available before convention time. Bill Hill's Oregon-California Trail Activity Book should also be ready very soon. Thirdly, Jim Budde's Revenue Task Force Committee's plan was approved by the board which should provide a foundation for future revenue planning by OCTA. Good work, Jim!

On Friday the day before, the board spent a relaxed and fruitful day summarizing the feedback they had given to a lengthy series of brainstorming questions. The Board and several members of the audience participated in break-out groups and general sessions to make the day a very positive experience. Good job by all!

On a more personal note, my old employer fell on hard times and I closed the local office. This freed me to leave the world of concrete construction, high-rise buildings and living on airplanes to do something a lot closer to my heart. Starting June 1, I will be the new executive Director of the Alexander Majors Historic House and Museum. I am delighted!

Advance registration for the Baker City Convention is at a record pace! I am certainly looking forward to being there and to see you all again at what should be one of our best conventions.

Ross Marshall



Above: This Wyoming scene along the Green River was taken during the river crossings float trip at last year's Rock Springs Convention. Similar photo opportunities will be present at this year's convention.

photo by Rose Ann Tompkins

## FROM THE BULK MAIL LADY

- Elaine McNabney, Headquarters Volunteer

I have three items to discuss with my fellow members. First, when you return your membership renewal cards, PLEASE print your name(s) exactly as you wish it to appear on your mailing label. I really hate guessing about family life. For example, last year Jack and Jill Felldown listed both of their names and had a family level membership. This year the renewal card was returned with the same family membership but just Jack Felldown's name. I print the mailing labels just as the renewal information is listed: did Jill break her crown or did she move away or did Jack just forget to include her name? (This works both ways, Ladies.) When the next mailing arrives with only Jack's name, is Jill then going to break HIS crown because her name is suddenly missing?

Second, your renewal reminder letter(s) and your annual directors' ballot are the only mail you receive first class and, therefore, forwardable by the postal service. Your OJ has "address correction requested" printed on the mailing cover; and if you have moved, even to another apartment in the same building, your OJ is returned to us with the new address affixed. We remail the OJ, and the total cost of this interchange is a bit over \$2.00. If you are away on vacation and have your mail held at the post office..the OJ comes back marked "temporarily away." Your NFP is not marked "address correction requested," and if not deliverable it is thrown away! We can't win here, folks, so please do two things. If you will let us know when you are going to be out of town, we can

hold your mail until you notify us you are home: call 816-252-2276 (night rates are cheaper) and leave a message on the machine. If you think you have missed a NFP, do the same thing. We won't spend your membership money by calling you back: we'll just remail whatever you have missed.

Finally, the bulk mailing rate has been increased twice in the last eight months and will increase again: the non-profit bulk mailing rate is probably going to be eliminated by the postal service. The cost to mail your OJ and NFP has doubled in the past five years. When you renew your membership you are permitted to add a bit to the bottom line!

## SECOND EDITION OF TRAIL MAP COMING SOON!!

OCTA's highly successful *Western Emigrant Trails* map has sold out its first printing of over 5,000 maps. An enhanced edition will soon go to press. Map Project Editor Bob Berry has introduced several new features to the map based on new research sources.

All trails, cutoffs, and alternates on the map will have a date indicating when each was first opened up for emigrant use. Several forts that related to overland emigrant traffic have been added with the date each fort was established. Additional natural and trail landmarks will appear on the map. You'll notice other improvements too, all rendered with a high level of historical accuracy.

The popular size, format, general appearance, and price will remain the same, including folded and flat versions, but the internal improvements will make an already excellent map even better. It will be available by the Baker City convention.

Both folded (4 1/8" x 8") and flat (22 1/2" x 33") maps sell for \$5.00 each plus \$1.00 shipping for the folded and \$1.75 shipping for the flat map (and 50 cents for each addition map ordered). Order from headquarters or look for them at OCTA's convention book table.

### 1994 OCTA CONVENTION CALL FOR PAPERS Great Salt Lake at the Crossroads

Dr. Gregory C. Thompson, Program Chairman, has issued a call for papers for presentation before the 1994 Annual Convention which will convene on August 10-14 at the Salt Lake Hilton in Salt Lake City. Sponsored by Utah Crossroads Chapter, next year's gathering will point up Utah as the destination of the Mormon emigration and as the crossroads of America's western movement.

Already scheduled are the plenary papers by Dr. Fred Gowans, professor of history at Brigham Young University, "The Fur Trade and the Opening of the Trails," and "The Mormon Emigration" by Dr. Stanley Kimball, OCTA founder and national authority on this topic. Other papers to complement these themes will range in subject from "The Fearful Long Drive: The Salt Desert Crossing" to the first look at the Bartleson-Bidwell Trail from Soda Springs to Pilot Peak on the Utah-Nevada border.

Field trips will cover the Mormon (Donner) Trail to Salt Lake Valley, Hensley's Salt Lake Cutoff to the Raft River Mountains and Hastings Cutoff across the Great Salt Lake Desert. Present plans call for workshops on genealogical research by L. D. S. (Mormon) Church experts, a Pony Express Trail archaeological investigation and sessions on COED, Mapping and Preservation.

While scheduled events reflect the themes indicated above, papers are solicited for consideration by the Program Committee on all aspects of the western migration.

Communication should be directed to:

Dr. Gregory C. Thompson  
Program Chairman, 1994 OCTA Convention  
Marriott Library, University of Utah  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84112

## NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

Jeanne Miller, Headquarters Manager

### New Materials available from OCTA:

**OCTA CAR WINDOW DECAL** - 3 1/8 x 1 7/8 inches \$2.00  
P&H .50

**OCTA's TENTH ANNIVERSARY GOLF SHIRT**  
Pale blue, OCTA logo printed on the heart pocket, short sleeves, long  
tail. Sizes M, L, XL \$29.95  
P&H 1.50

**OREGON TRAIL VIDEO** - a shortened version of the  
Boettcher/Trinklein four-videotape original \$19.95  
P&H 3.00

**AUDIO TAPE: The Story of the Oregon Trail**  
produced by Boettcher/Trinklein

In your car or in your home, you can listen to the story of the great  
western trek. You'll hear selections from pioneer diaries, commentary  
from renowned historians, and authentic sounds of the trail. Running  
time, 90 minutes. \$9.95

P&H 3.00

### NEW BOOKS:

#### **THE TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO THE OREGON TRAIL**

by Julie Fanselow

The author describes the history and attractions along the entire  
Oregon Trail route - from Independence, Missouri to Oregon City,  
Oregon. She highlights historic sites, recreational attractions, and  
where to stay and eat. Detailed maps and photographs complement  
the narrative and eight pages of color photos capture the Trail's  
dramatic scenery.

\$11.95

P&H 3.00

There will be a dozen or more booksellers (including OCTA) in the  
Book room at the Baker City Convention. Please be sure to visit us in the  
Kopper Kettle, which is perpendicular to the headquarters motel. Many  
rare and old books will be displayed, as well as newly published books and  
old stand-bys.



## FROM THE EDITOR

OCTA is certainly moving ahead, showing that its membership is alive with new ideas! You will find information on several new ventures that are now available to the membership.

After much anticipation by researchers, genealogists and trail buffs, the COED project is announcing that the database is open for searches by OCTA members. All of that hard work by all the volunteers over the last few years is now paying off!

The Revenue Task Force has spent a year putting together a program to increase funds in several ways, paving the way for OCTA to expand existing programs and to strengthen the base. Read Jim Budde's article to see where you might fit into this new plan.

And finally, Special Publications is moving into new horizons with the Emigrant Trails Historical Study Series. This project is of special interest to me. As I have surveyed documents for COED, I have seen several diaries that I felt trail buffs would enjoy reading. You may think that all the really good diaries have already been published in one form or another, but that is not true. This is going to be a wonderful opportunity to get more of these accounts into circulation at a reasonable cost. I can hardly wait to see what is going to happen with this new venture!

Rose Ann Tompkins, Editor  
1125 W. Mission Dr.  
Chandler, AZ 85224  
(602) 963-3565



## CELEBRATE !

Get in the mood with your  
souvenir Golf Shirt & Sun Visor  
Men's and Women's

OCTA Booth - Book Room



Next NFP deadline - September 1

NFP July 1993 - page 5

## NEW OCTA PUBLICATIONS

### *Reading, Writing, and Riding Along the Oregon-California Trails*

An Educational Activity Book

by William E. Hill

OCTA's Education Committee offers this new publication, giving the reader an informative and entertaining way to learn about the history and challenges of nineteenth-century overland emigrant travel. It is perfect for middle school students to adults who are just beginning to learn about the overland trails.

The book's activities all relate to emigrant trail history and experience. Some are just for fun, others require more interpretation and skill. They include timelines, crossword puzzles, word searches, map work, reading comprehension, charts, and graphs. At the end there is a section for the reader to write a sample travel journal.

William E. Hill is a high school social studies teacher in Commack, New York. He has traveled and explored the trails for more than twenty-five years and is the well-known author of the "Yesterday and Today" books about the Oregon, California, and Santa Fe trails. Bill is a long-time OCTA member, a former board member and chair of the Education Committee.

### *The Overland Memoir of Charles Frederick True*

A Teenager on the California Trail,  
1859

Edited by Sally Ralston True

When he was in his seventies, Charles Frederick True wrote this memoir of his 1859 trip over the California Trail at the age of sixteen. It was edited and published by his granddaughter Sally Ralston True in 1966 entitled *Covered Wagon Pioneers*. This book is a reprint, with revised preface and maps, of this engaging and informative account of the overland emigrant experience.

Charles True was an observant teenager with a delightful sense of humor. His account of pioneer life in Minnesota and his overland trip is lively, rich in colorful detail, and is enhanced with the inclusion of letters written by his father to family members remaining behind. This book will appeal to anyone interested in first person accounts of emigrant overland travel.

Sally Ralston True has a Ph.D. in Education from the University of Wisconsin. She taught English Literature to teachers before retiring to Honolulu, Hawaii.

This reprint is offered by the Publications Committee of OCTA.

**Both of these publications will be available at the convention,  
or may be ordered directly from Headquarters**

*Reading, Writing, and Riding Along the Oregon-California Trails*,  
by William E. Hill, 63 pages, \$6.95 plus Shipping and Handling,  
\$2.00 for first book, \$1.00 for each additional book.

*The Overland Memoir of Charles Frederick True*, edited by Sally Ralston  
True, 109 pages, 5 illustrations, 2 maps. \$7.95, plus Shipping and  
Handling, \$3.00 for first book, \$1.00 for each additional book.

Send order to: Oregon-California Trails Association  
P. O. Box 1019  
Independence, MO 64051-0519

## CLYDE ARBUCKLE HONORED ON 90TH BIRTHDAY

Clyde Arbuckle, City Historian of the City of San Jose, was honored at a reception given at Fiesta Hall, County Fairgrounds, on April 13, 1993 by a consortium of historical groups. The Argonauts Historical Society, an offshoot of the class taught for over thirty years by Arbuckle for the Metropolitan Adult Education Program, spearheaded the effort. Many members of the committee represented historical organization other than the Argonauts. Among them were OCTA members.

Well over 200 persons thronged the hall, decorated with posters created by Henry Calloway, a banner from the Clyde Arbuckle Elementary School, and panels showing events in the life of Arbuckle in the course of his 90 years. A slide projector showed pictures of his home, his bike-racing days, his banjo-playing days, and finally his deep immersion in the history of San Jose, Santa Clara County, California, and the West.

Letters were read which were written in honor of the occasion, and a number of certificates were presented from various groups. Many people went to the podium to extol the many achievements of Clyde Arbuckle over his busy life as a historian.

A keepsake biography of Clyde Arbuckle was distributed to attendees.

A Clyde Arbuckle Scholarship Fund has been established to provide grants in the amount of \$500 per calendar year for the study and investigation of local history, to be administered by the Sourisseau Academy of San Jose State University. To contribute to this scholarship fund, send a check made out to the Argonauts Historical Society to them at 1641 Carmel Dr., San Jose, CA 95125. For further information, call Lyn Bean, (408) 295-4514. (taken from an article written by Harriet Duzet for the Argonauts Historical Society)

Mary Mueller, shown in the picture on the next page with Clyde Arbuckle, reports that the fund is at \$4545 and continues to grow.

# EMIGRANT TRAILS HISTORICAL STUDY SERIES - A NEW VENTURE BY THE PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

Our Board of Directors has approved the publication of the new Emigrant Trails Historical Studies Series (ETHSS) that will include unpublished diaries and historical studies relating to the emigrant trails or aspects of the emigrant experience. Each book in the series will be selected for its appeal to trail buffs or anyone wanting to know more about emigrant trails.

The series will be administered as a part of the Publications Committee, much like the *Overland Journal* and *News From the Plains*, with Susan Badger Doyle serving as the General Editor. Susan comes well prepared, having a doctorate in American Studies and having written scholarly books on the Bozeman Trail. In preparation for selecting the first book in the historical studies series, Susan has formed an editorial advisory board consisting of ten of OCTA's trail and publishing experts.

To enhance the luster of the series, each new title in the series will have the same distinctive cover design and be numbered sequentially. You'll want to collect them for your trail library. Our goal is to publish one book in the series every year or two, depending on how well the series sells and the availability of funds to produce them. Most likely the first in the series will be an outstanding unpublished trail diary. But good

things like this have a price tag.

Though we are confident the series will be first rate and a market success, our immediate concern is how the ETHSS will be funded. In the lead article in this issue of the NFP, OCTA's Treasurer, Jim Budde, has announced the association's new Revenue Enhancement Plan which includes special designated funds. Members are invited to contribute to any of these special funds which they would like to support. Already we have established the Special Publications Fund as the source for funding the ETHSS. Rather than relying on continuous contributions or drawing from membership dues for publishing each book in the historical studies series, we have planned the Special Publications Fund to become self-sustaining after an initial contribution level of \$10,000 has been attained. Our goal is to reach that capital base of \$10,000 by no later than next summer. In the meantime, the general editor will be working on the first book in the series. That gives us a one year "window of opportunity" within which to make the ETHSS a reality. But that reality depends on you.

The funding would work like this. Your donations would serve as the means of paying for the production costs of the first book in the series. After that, net proceeds from sales of each book

would return to the Special Publications Fund to make it self-sustaining. In this way, new books would be published periodically as the fund was restored with the net proceeds from sales of already published books in the series. The ETHSS would become a "win" situation for members and the association. Members could purchase at a very reasonable cost—largely due to lots of volunteer editorial work—interesting and unique books on the emigrant trail and OCTA would not have to use its scarce general funds to pay publishing costs. And, too, the ETHSS would become a third jewel in OCTA's crowning, ongoing, publishing achievements, right after the OJ and NFP.

Sounds great? Of course! But the whole plan depends on you book lovers and trail buffs to contribute to the Special Publications Fund. Already, even before this first official announcement, the plan is working. Through the "grapevine"—you can't keep a great idea secret—a few members have heard of this exciting new series and have donated to the Special Publications Fund. It's a gratifying start but much more is needed to launch the historical studies series next year with its first publication. So make your check out to "OCTA—Special Publications Fund," and send it to:

OCTA Special Publications Fund  
P.O. Box 1019  
Independence, MO 64051-0519

Should you have any questions about the series or its funding, don't hesitate to call me (408-739-8521) or attend our open house, question-and-answer session at the Baker Convention on Friday, 7:00 P.M., in the Oregon Trail Room at the Quality Inn. The General Editor, Susan Badger Doyle, and I will be there to answer your questions and explain more about the forthcoming historical studies series. In anticipation of your indispensable support, we thank you!

Don Buck, Publications Chair

NFP July 1993 - page 7



Above: Clyde Arbuckle and Mary Mueller, OCTA Charter Members, at his 90th birthday reception.  
photo by Ola Lindquist

# BAKER CITY CONVENTION UPDATES

from Jonne Hower and Ric Ingham

## SPECIAL MUSICAL EVENING AT THE CONVENTION

Baker City has planned an evening of special entertainment...the debut appearance of "Fanny" and "The Trail Band" on the same stage. Both "The Trail Band" and "Fanny," have been traveling the state independently performing to sold out theaters. But on Thursday, August 12, both will be performing on one stage for what may be the most emotionally uplifting entertainment performed at any OCTA Convention.

Fanny, portrayed by Joyce Badgley, appears on stage in authentic Oregon Trail costuming with Oregon Trail props. She speaks first-person with her audience about her Oregon Trail experience, detailing not only the physical journey of the 2000 miles but also the emotional and psychological journey those 2000 miles demanded. She compares life in rural Missouri society to life on the Trail, and what she understands life to be in "this new Oregon country" from a typically female perspective.

The Trail Band performs music from and about the era of the Oregon Trail with songs ranging from marches

to hymns to hoedowns to Native American melodies. Performing in 19th century military-style band uniforms and with many old and unique instruments, the band's concert brings home the emotions and history of the Oregon Trail through brass instrumentals, diary reading, and powerful acappella vocal performances.

The performance will be at the Baker High School auditorium after the Thursday night barbecue. Cost for the show is \$9.50.

*A photograph of Fanny can be seen on the cover of the newsletter. The Trail Band is shown below.*





## CONVENTION REGISTRATION HEAVY

As of the last report from the National OCTA office over 450 members have registered for the OCTA Convention planned for August 9 -14. According to Dick Ackerman, Convention Chairman, "the current flow of convention reservations provide an indication that this will be the largest OCTA Convention to date. "Not only is it going to the largest convention to date but every effort is being made to make this an exceptional convention for all delegates," Ackerman goes on to say.

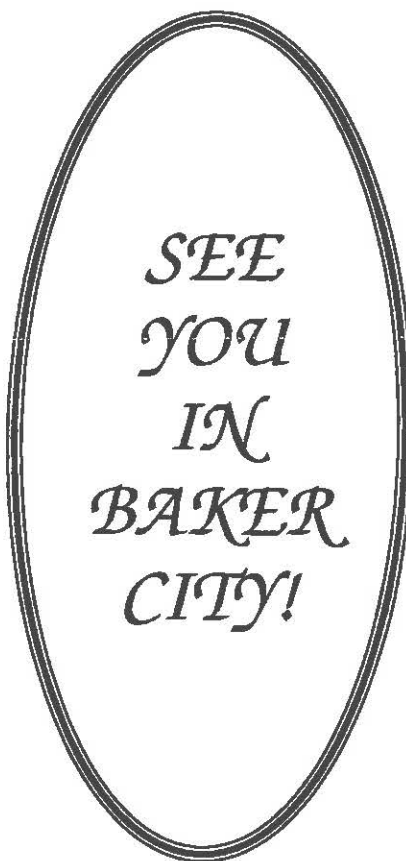
Final arrangements for the convention are going very smoothly. The pre-convention tours and the archaeological workshop on June 9 are quickly filling up. All other activities have been arranged so that no interested delegates will be turned away from convention activities.

Baker City motels are filling up fast. Due to the limited availability of remaining rooms we have set aside blocks of rooms 40 miles away in two La Grande motels. Those motels participating in La Grande are:

Pony Soldier Motor Inn  
Island City Strip  
La Grande, OR  
(503) 963-7195

Super 8 Motel  
2407 East R Ave.  
La Grande, OR  
(503) 963-8080

For those interested in RV parks or camping, there are plenty of quality campgrounds within a short drive of Baker City. If you would like more information about campground options contact the Baker County Visitor & Convention Bureau, 1-800-523-1235.



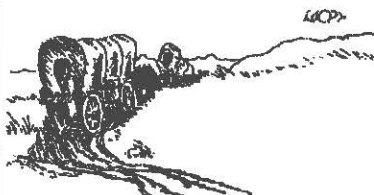
## PAIUTE LEADERS WILL SPEAK TO TOUR PARTICIPANTS AT THE CONVENTION

Special arrangements have been made to have two Paiute tribal leaders speak Friday and Saturday as part of the north group tour. The two tribal leaders are from the Burns Reservation. Their discussion will center around their peoples' way of life prior to the advent of the first white visitors and the subsequent changes that resulted in the arrival of permanent settlers.

The north group tour will depart both days at 7:30 AM and the south tour will depart 1/2 hour later at 8:00 AM. The tribal leaders will address the OCTA group as they gather for a pow-wow at the Riverside Park in La Grande. Plans are to be back in Baker City at 5:00 PM for dinner.

Dick Ackerman  
Convention Chairman  
(503) 581-0328

SEE THE RUTS, THE TERRAIN, AND THE LANDMARKS  
AS IF YOU WERE TRAVELING WEST  
DURING THE 1840'S AND 1850'S.



## THE TRAIL TO OREGON

A 50-minute video for pioneers of all ages.

Commended by:  
Gregory Franzwa, author of MAPS OF THE OREGON TRAIL.

Recipient of the 1990 "Yummy Award" for outstanding contribution to Community Access Television, Yamhill County, Oregon, settled in 1843.

© Gene and Betty Comfort, VISTAS UNLIMITED  
All rights reserved. Reproduction of this videotape is prohibited by law.

Everything you view in THE TRAIL TO OREGON was recorded on actual sites along the trail from Missouri to Oregon.

This is the only video that shows the Columbia River Route as well as the complete Barlow Road. Settlement scenes from the Willamette Valley are included to complete this accurate historical documentary. Typical instrumental music and personal interest tidbits from emigrants enhance the program.

THE TRAIL TO OREGON VHS video was researched, videotaped and produced by Oregon History teachers Gene and Betty Comfort and is currently being used in schools and homes in Idaho and Oregon and Washington.

The 50-minute format is divided into two 25-minute segments.

Program 1: Missouri to Fort Hall

Program 2: Fort Hall to the Willamette Valley

To order send \$25 to:

THE TRAIL TO OREGON  
Gene and Betty Comfort  
941 S.W. Red Hills Drive  
Dundee, Oregon 97115

Teacher's Supplement available upon request.  
(Free with order)

# BROWN STRIKES AGAIN

By Lee Underbrink

Our indefatigable Randy Brown has solved another one of Wyoming's mysteries of the trail.

On the McIntosh ranch, off Highway 287 in Fremont County, is the formation called Castle Rock. Many diarists mention this rock as they travel along the Sweetwater because, from below, it has a rectangular appearance of a castle. The rock, when you climb into it, appears to have walls like a castle.

Deeply carved in the walls of this rock is the inscription, W Sublett, June 17, 1849. The inscription looks very authentic, except it has weathered probably too well. There is even an arrow pointing to it so it can be readily noticed. It is possible that an "e" was originally on the end of the name, but that portion is now hard to see.

There were five Sublette brothers, of which four were famous mountainmen. Their names were William, Milton, Andrew, and Pinckney Sublette. We know that William knew how to carve his name on a rock because on August 16, 1844, James Clyman noted the name of W. L. Sublette on Independence Rock.

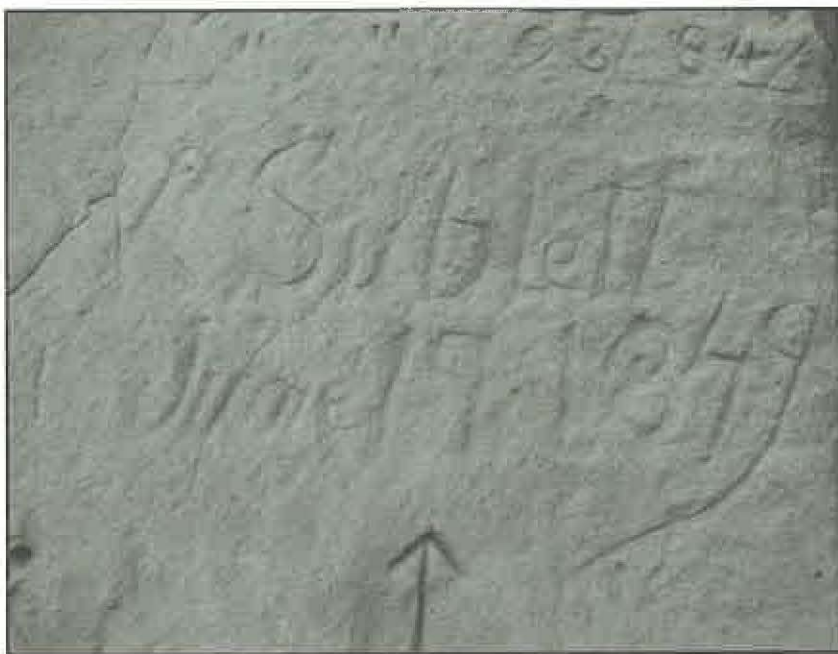
A famous inscription of the mountain man William Sublette, found and Identified - NOT!

The slight problem with the inscription is the fact that William Lewis Sublette died July 23, 1845, four years before the date on our Castle Rock.

The fact that the inscription was so deep was related by William McIntosh, who said, as a younger man, he used to deepen the inscription with his knife to keep it readable for future generations.

Randy Brown has built a fine collection of emigrant trail diaries. Among his collection is that of "The Overland Journal of Alexander Love, Detailing His Trip Across The Plains From Pennsylvania To The Gold Diggings In 1849". The diary lists the name of a man in "mess No. 3" of that party by the name of Sublett.

The diary dates the journey and guess what? On June 17, 1849 this party was at Castle Rock. To quote the diary,



Above: Sublett inscription at Castle Rock in Wyoming.

photo by Lee Underbrink

June 16 "we drove 11 m and nooned at Independence Rock. Crossd the Sweetwater, drove through Devil Gate 8 m. and campd by the river. Here the Artimessa was as thick (as) a good sized apple tree. Sunday June 17, started at 6. Drove 9m and nooned on Sage Crick. I

killed an antelope. We see snow all the time on the south of the road. Drove 7 m. and camped by the Sweetwater".

Love's diary continues September 7, 1849, "Hunted the ox all day. Staid with Sublets. The old man very sick. Died after I left".



## SANTA FE TRAIL ASSOCIATION SYMPOSIUM

Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site and nearby La Junta, Colorado, will host the nonprofit Santa Fe Trail Association's biennial symposium on September 23-26, 1993.

Many of the activities (including sumptuous period dinners) will be held at the historic adobe fort, built in 1833-34 on the north bank of the Arkansas River in southeast Colorado. Other activities will occur at historic Boggsville, a nearby trail-era settlement.

The 1,400-member association's popular gathering is open to the general public, and to prospective, past and current members. The theme of the 1993 symposium will be "Corridor Through Time".

For further information, contact Don Hill at Bent's Old Fort NHS, 35110 Highway 194-E, La Junta CO 81050 (719-384-2596).

# CHAPTER NEWS

## UTAH CROSSROADS

### WORK BEGINS ON DONNER SPRING PROJECT

The fencing phase of the Donner Spring Preservation Project began in April and May with the delivery of the treated fence posts and rails to the work site. In April, Utah Crossroads members Vern Gorzitze, Al Mulder, Morris Goates, Randy Wilson and Kent Malan, loaded and trucked the fencing materials and PVC water line sections from Salt Lake City to the TL Bar Ranch and started installing posts and rail sections. Fence construction had to be halted because of huge piles of mud dredged from the spring earlier by ranch employees. In May, Crossroads members Al Mulder, Vern Gorzitze, Boyd Blanthorn, John Balmforth and Ralph MacFarlane, installed several sections of fencing, completing half of the fencing project around the spring. The ranch foreman leveled the mud piles around the spring with a D-7 "cat" making our post hole digging efforts much easier.



*Above: At the Donner Spring site, Al Mulder stands at the partially completed fence around this trail spring.*

During the work, the two resident swans which have taken up "homesteading" at the Spring flew to a nearby field only to return after the work crew had finished for the day. We are hoping the swans will remain during the work and after the project is completed and dedicated. They provide a peaceful scene and add to the isolated beauty and serenity of the site.

Plans are to complete the fencing and water line work this summer and to have the interpretive panels and kiosks designed and fabricated for installation early next summer. OCTA members wanting to donate funds to the project should send a check payable to Utah Crossroads, and mark it for the "Donner Spring Preservation Project". Send it to: Gar Elison, Treasurer, 351 North 300 East, Kaysville, Utah 84037.

Al Mulder

### HIGH DESERT ADVENTURE ON THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL

Chapter members and friends were treated to a superlative (no exaggeration!) spring field trip along the California Trail on May 21st and 22nd. The previous spring we had gone along the Hensley Salt Lake Cutoff from Salt Lake City to Granite Pass. Excitement ran high at the prospect of completing another segment of the California Trail this year. Word spread far and wide and by rendezvous time the trip had become so popular that altogether there were 21 vehicles, 53 people, and one dog.

We left Wells about 8 AM on Saturday morning. Roy Tea, Crossroads "wagonmaster", and Steve Dondero of the BLM were our pilots. Wells had been appropriately named for the springs of water emigrants found in the vicinity and which we could see in the fields. Our first stop was a trail marker just outside of Wells. Steve pointed out where the trail had crossed a sagebrush covered bench. We traveled on a dirt road across sagebrush flats that had once been lush grasslands according to the Perkins journal of 1849.

On Highway 93, we paralleled the trail through Thousand Springs Valley. Roy Tea's maps and Steve's explanatory comments made it pleasant and easy to see where the trail had been.

We had a breakfast snack above Brush Creek. Nature was extremely kind that day—the weather was balmy and the wildflowers were in their most magnificent phase. We were surrounded on this journey by yellow balsam root, bluebells and larkspur, the whites, lavenders and pinks of phlox, and the white of service berry blossoms. There were even very few mosquitoes and flies. Unfortunately there was the ever-present dust. Still we were able to bask in the

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Above: This group photo was taken of those who participated in the Utah Crossroads spring trek on the California Trail.

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beauty of spring in the high desert and see it at its greenest.

Down at Brush Creek the trail was pointed out to us and we received an informative talk from the naturalist side of Steve. Of course it wouldn't be a trek unless someone got stuck in the mud. This year the honor went to Gar Elison as we tried to get back up on the highway from Brush Creek.

After extricating Gar's vehicle, we continued to the California Trail Back Country By-Way. A well-maintained gravel road took us to the Wine Cup Ranch (once owned by Jimmy Stewart) that had a long and interesting history. The hot and cold springs in this area were mentioned by many diarists of the trail. We stopped here and Steve spoke to us about the interpretive panels and kiosk that the BLM will be placing there. Steve explained the BLM's work to preserve the trail and make it accessible to and understood by the public. We express our gratitude to Steve Dondero for his and the BLM's efforts in trail preservation.

Off we headed along the By-way. It was a thrill to occasionally be right on top of the trail. A stop was made at Chicken Springs. It was great to see OCTA markers all along the trail as we traveled. (Thank you Don Buck, et al!)

We had our lunch at Rock Springs. The nooning place was quiet, restful, and beautiful.

Throughout the day as we journeyed, we referred frequently to the journal excerpts taken from the excellent handout prepared by Will Bagley from the Mormon Battalion "boys" journals. Excerpts were read from *Emigrant Trails West*. We learned there were many deaths of humans and animals from Granite Pass to Wells.

The trail along Little Goose Creek and Goose Creek was truly beautiful this time of year; we were glad we weren't traveling in July and August as most of the emigrants had done.

In late afternoon part of the group split off to return to their homes. The rest continued on to Birch Creek (in Idaho). We went up the canyon and hiked up part of the trail coming down out of Granite Pass. It was fascinating to see the rope marks on trees where the wagons had to be restrained from the headlong descent. The trail was very visible and the scenery breathtaking. It was a perfect end to the day.

Another part of the group broke off here to go over Granite Pass to camp in City of the Rocks and explore it Sunday. The rest continued the journey on into Burley, Idaho, for the night.

Sunday morning's rendezvous was at the Raft River exit on I-86. This time we would do the trail going west along the Raft River. Lyle Woodbury, trail buff, friend to OCTA, and local property owner, was our "guide

extraordinaire". Gar Elison was our captain. Gar had prepared an interpretative handout and maps that were very useful for the day.

Lyle took us over ranch land to many points on the trail, including grave sites and the parting of the ways to Oregon and California. The trail had been well-marked by OCTA, but Lyle showed us other unmarked sections as well. He was a very gracious and informative guide. He went the extra mile to make us feel welcome to see the sites: ruts, graves, names in axle grease on the rocks, OCTA markers and even some baby hawks in their nest. He had supervised a group of Cub Scouts who had built a trail up to the names rock for us. What a host! It was exciting to have that "being there" feeling.

After leaving Lyle, Gar took us on further up the Raft River Valley to see other trail areas, many of which had been obliterated by cultivated fields. We ate lunch at McGlendon Spring, a favorite camp site on the California Trail. Then we basically followed the trail toward Malta.

Once we hit the highway again, it meant time to head home, so we did. Thus ended Utah Crossroads' spring trek and this tale.

Lyndia Carter

# SOUTHWEST

## Hitting the Road Again

By Pat and Paul Etter

Members gathered in Deming, New Mexico, on March 20 and 21, to continue searching for segments of the Southern Trail. We had three items on our agenda: a visit to Foster's Hole; a ride through Cooke's Pass; and a drive over the Coyote Hills toward Playas Lake. Historian Don Couchman came from Mesilla, NM to guide and interpret to our group at Foster's Hole and Cooke's Pass.

On Saturday we split up into 4WD vehicles. Our destination was Jug Canyon, where we expected to find Foster's Hole and to be among the few who had actually seen and photographed the long-lost watering hole.<sup>1</sup> Philip St. George Cooke named it after a member of his staff, Dr. George B. Foster, in 1846. It is about 15 miles from the Rio Grande and was used by early emigrants for a few years after that.

We drove over rolling gamma-covered hills, gradually descending into a wash and rocky defiles, which became more canyon-like as we moved in. We finally left our cars and clambered (carefully) a couple of hundred feet down to find a catchment basin surrounded by a perpendicular rocky wall on three sides. There was no mistaking it, since it matched a reliable sketch and photograph that Don Couchman brought along. We saved the directions to Foster's Hole, mapped it, marked it, and photographed it.

*Right: These groves are found in the Cooke's Pass area on the Southern Trail in New Mexico. photo by Rose Ann Tompkins*



We drove back on NM #26 to Florida Station, marked by a tank filled with water from Cooke's Well. Turning north, we stopped first at Fort Cummings, built in 1863 to protect mail carriers and emigrant trains from Apache attack. Cooke's spring is nearby. It has changed since '49, when Cornelius Cox said the spring was in a marshy spot, the water was bad, and there was no wood of any kind.<sup>2</sup> A hogan-shaped wood structure now shields the well, which is surrounded by a forest of mesquite.

After lunch we climbed back into our "wagons" for the drive through Cooke's Pass. The road passes through the southern extremity of Cooke's Peak and winds over and around the foothills. A good deal of the trail still exists, but the face of the country has changed because of diversion dams, natural erosion, and an 1983 flood. Nonetheless, our gang got a good feeling of what it must have been like to roll over mile after mile in the direction of California, not knowing what lay ahead. Moreover, as Don Couchman told us, the Apache were a fearsome threat, and his stories of their massacres got our attention.

Many of us can't call ourselves spring chickens. Nevertheless, at one point, the gang spread out like mountain goats and bounded over the rocks to the top of a hill to find some very good petroglyphs, probably left by ancestors of the Mimbrenos.

We had real adventure on Sunday. Our plan was to find the route from Separ to Playas Lake through the Coyote Hills. Except for ranchers who use the road, we have been the first to go over this road with the knowledge that it

had been used by emigrants, the Mormon Battalion, and, before that, the Mexicans and Spanish on their way to Chihuahua.

We did what all good trail trackers do: We attempted to obtain permission from local ranchers to drive on their land. In spite of the remoteness of the area, all of the fences have locked gates and we needed a key. One rancher said his gate had a lock with a combination but would not give us the combination without permission of the rancher on the other side of the fence. After this was obtained, the first rancher caved in and said, "Okay, you can drive on my ranch." During these negotiations, Pat Etter had the distinct feeling that the locals thought we were strange folk with nothing better to do.

When we reached the gate we found many locks, each one requiring a key! The combination padlock was attached to a lone link on the fence post. We tried it, but it did not work. Furthermore, if it had, it would not have opened the gate.

Undaunted, we found a ranch road that led to the Coyote Hills road. Harland Tompkins used his new longitude/latitude position locator to tell us exactly where we were on the topo map. We bounced over the Coyote Hills road and soon after found Vista Tank, where Emory noted "water for 50 animals." It was a very pretty scene, with ranchers' horses gamboling about. Near the end of the road we saw Playas Lake, a glistening streak in the distance. Don Buck was excited to note some good swales, which would rate a 2 1/2, according to OCTA standards.

Now it was time to leave. The gang drove back to Bowlines Trading Post, where we had left our extra cars, munched more lunch, voted the trip a success, hugged everyone all around, and reluctantly left for home.

1. It can be located in section 36, Jug Canyon Quadrangle, New Mexico-Sierra County, 7.5 minute series, 1989.
2. Cornelius Cox, "From Texas to California in 1849," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 29 (1925-1926), 135.

## GATEWAY

### ALCOVE SPRING UPDATE

We note here the passing of Mrs. Stella Hammett, a great friend of the trail in Kansas. As owner of the Alcove Spring area, she was most gracious to those WHO ASKED PERMISSION to view the site. Just days before her passing, she signed a lease, which the Blue Rapids Chamber of Commerce had long sought. A dedicated group of local people began clean up of the site. In an effort to preserve the famous "J.F. Reed" inscription, the boulder was moved from the creek bottom to the hillside. We're sorry to report that in the process, "Reed" was forever destroyed. Realizing a need for professional guidance, KSHS was called in. On May 11 a planning session was held. OCTA members, including Pres. Ross Marshall, were in attendance. Blue Rapids is well on the way to developing and improving this important site.

On March the 13th as the mercury reached a blistering 20 degrees, a dozen daring souls headed west on the St. Joe Road. As a strong north wind howled, we visited the Prairie Springs campground, a cholera victims burial site along the old trail. The spring still gushes a surprising amount of water. Next was a brief (but warm!) stop at the Iowa, Sac and Fox Mission for an update on

KSHS's plan for it's future. Another stop was the trail crossing of Coon Creek. A well defined trail comes down the bluff through the timber to this rock crossing.

May 11 we met at the remodeled Pony Express National Memorial. In it's previous condition, the Stables attracted thousands each year. The new facility ranks up there with the likes of Scottsbluff and Ft. Laramie National Memorials. If you get close to St. Joseph, this is a "must see".

May 15 we participated in the annual Robidoux Rendevous. Hosted by StJHS, this event commemorates the founder of our village, Joseph Robidoux. The historical society has done a great job restoring a portion of Robidoux's original residence. It is another "must see". Also planned soon is an archaeological dig at the suspected site of the original Trading Post.

### TRICOUNTY MARKER

May 22 we participated in the rededication of the TriCounty Marker of the Oregon-California Trail. The 1913 DAR monument rests on the Kansas-Nebraska line. (see page 52 of *The St. Joe Road*) Stranded on a remote road (impassible when wet) the marker seemed all but forgotten. Duane Durst

(Director, Hollenberg Pony Express Station-KSHS) and friends wanted to change that! Gateway Chapter approved a donation for the cause.

Aggravated by weather delays, much has happened at the site. The road was graded, new culverts installed and gravel laid to the trail area. One acre of ground was donated by a friend of the trail, Mrs. Helen Moore in Gage Co., Nebraska. The former site was across the road in Washington Co., Kansas. While the marker wintered in downtown Lanham, KS, concrete was poured at the site for a sidewalk and the marker base. The refinished marker and landscaping of the site are a tribute to the preservation efforts of Duane and friends.

A wagon train arrived in time for the rededication festivity. The ceremony included dignitaries of the DAR, KSHS and many interested individuals from the community.

The second half of 1993 looks just as busy! Thanks to all around the country who have inquired about our activities. I enjoy hearing from you and will respond to your requests for information ASAP. Dave Martin

## CALIFORNIA-NEVADA-HAWAII

### JACKSON MINI-CONVENTION

More than 100 OCTA members, including several national officials, attended the Saturday, April 24 symposium, with many staying over for the COED workshop on Sunday.

Banquet Speaker Ken Owen started off with a light touch. To get past the archivist who guards that special collection, he told us, you've got to have the proper image. A yellow corduroy coat, with a pencil in the pocket, works best, in his experience. And always ask

"Do you have a finding aid?" If they do, they're flattered to share it; if they don't, they'll feel apologetic, and try to make up for it with lots of personal help.

Dr. Owen, who has spoken at two OCTA national conventions, used as his serious theme the reaction of the emigrants coming fresh to their experience with nature, most of them "had never seen a mountain before." They were not too impressed by the Rockies, which they crossed by way of gentle South Pass. But the Sierra really hit them. "One of the most gorgeous sights ever seen" one diarist noted. Another was "struck with indescribable awe."

One of the most important things that came out of that experience, Dr. Owen emphasized, was a new feeling of respect for the grandeur of nature, as something to be appreciated, and not just conquered by Man. The diaries are full of references to wild animals, to flowers and trees, to scenic panoramas.

Owen's prize comment was from Anson Clark, who had lost all his outfit, even his shoes, and, dressed in rags, begged his way along the trail to the base of the Sierra. "It was the purtiest scene I ever saw," he wrote with his stub of a pencil. "This sight paid me for all my hardships."



*Left: Chuck Dodd (left) and Don Buck won the hat contest at the Jackson Mini-convention.*

*photo by Shann Rupp*

the mythical Buena Ventura River and an easy passage through the mountain, Hammond suggests. He might have been exploring. Or he might have just been lost.

When Fremont did take off for Sutter's Fort, he departed from the Markleeville area by looping through Thornburg Canyon. When he got to Carson Pass, he went path finding again.

Instead of dropping down over the route the Mormon-Emigrant Trail, he led his men up over the shoulder of Red Peak and along the ridge to the American River, which he followed on down to Sutter's Fort. Why? Well, it was the obvious route for a man who knew that the Fort was due West, but didn't know anything about the country in between.

David Johnson, OCTA's mapping chair, gave us the tale of the Sonora Pass route, which he has been mapping. It was another of those efforts to divert emigrants, this time to Sonora and Columbia, in the hope that by bringing in families, they could stabilize the local economy as the initially rich diggings began to give out.

It was a hard sell. The route had four passes over 9,000 feet; it was 100 miles farther to Sacramento, and though the distance was shorter to Columbia, it took longer to get there. To pull in the emigrants, the locals hired a swash-buckler who was on his uppers after failing in an attempt to organize a filibustering expedition to Mexico. Not even his shameless huckerstering lured many emigrants over the pass, however, and when they finally did start to

come, they used it mainly as a route to go right on through the two Mother Lode towns to Stockton and the San Joaquin Valley.

Judy Allen, our mini-convention chair, stuck to kid stuff in her talk. Few children actually kept diaries, she said. Most reported their experiences in later years, to record their adventure for their descendents.

But Judy, a teacher, did find many diaries by children, and discovered their outlook was not always the same as those of their elders. The children didn't seem as regretful about leaving home as their parents, particularly their mothers, were. After all, Judy observed, the children weren't leaving their own families behind; they were taking them with them.

Along the trail, they were interested in the wildlife, and the scenery. The older ones sometimes wandered off to see the view from some promontory, and had to be rounded up by worried parents. The children were fearful of Indians, but perhaps less so than the adults, tending to judge the savages by the relatively peaceful behavior they usually saw.

If children thought the trip would be an escape from chores, they soon found out differently. Boys fed the stock and helped take care of them; some drove whole herds by themselves. When a father died, a boy in his early teens might have to take over full adult responsibility. Girls milked the cows, helped their mothers with the cooking and washing, and tended younger children. There was no shirking for anyone; there was no place to hide!

Don Buck, OCTA's publications chair, rose daringly to show slides after lunch, and kept the most drowsy alert by showing how photography could be used to match old sketches to the present landscape and thus pinpoint spots on the trail. He also showed aerials that revealed patterns of trails that can't be perceived from the ground.

And with the last coffee-soaked paper cup barely tossed in the trash, plans are being laid for another mini-convention next year.

Bill Dillinger, Chapter Publicity

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Not so impressed was a traveler on the Beckwourth Trail, quoted by one of our morning speakers, Andy Hammond, who has been studying that trail through the Feather River country. "Willy said he would not like to spend his life in California, if this was it," his mother, Harriet S. Ward, reported from their stop at the top of the pass in 1853.

Beckwourth developed the trail in 1851 to lure emigrants to American Valley (now the Quincy area) and as a route into the upper Sacramento Valley via Marysville, Hammond told us. But it wasn't true that the town burned down from celebrating the arrival of the first wagons.

Kit Carson got his lumps in the talk by Larry Cenotto, the Archivist for Amador County (don't try the yellow coat and pencil ploy with him; he's been wised up). Carson was hired by Fremont as a hunter, not a guide, and he didn't know the Sierra country at all.

What was the Fremont party doing, anyway, wandering around in the snow, and then trying to cross the Sierra in mid-winter on a route no one has ever taken since? The young lieutenant might have been making one last effort to find

# THE QUINTESSENTIAL BLUE PRAIRIE OF JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI

Article and photo by  
Walter L. Cook

There is an area located in west-central Jackson County, Missouri, which, during the pioneer period of the 19th century, was called the "Blue Prairie." This area of high prairie country is situated between the Big and Little Blue River valleys.

The historic Santa Fe Trail route from Independence proceeded in a generally southwest direction through the "Blue Prairie" on its way towards the western border of Missouri.

Seldom has as much been written and recorded for posterity about the magnificent beauty of the aforesaid "Blue Prairie" as has been by Edwin Bryant, in his journal of a tour in the years 1846 and 1847 entitled *What I Saw in California*, first published in New York in 1848.

According to Bryant, the 1846 overland journey to California commenced on the afternoon of May 5th from the town of Independence. Due to the muddy road, the wagon caravan was forced to encamp for the night south of a stream which crossed the road about two miles south of town.

The following morning Bryant wrote, "As we approached what is called the Blue Prairie, the road became much drier and less difficult. The vast prairie itself soon opened before us in all its grandeur and beauty." [Note: This would have been in the present-day vicinity of 67th and Blue Ridge Blvd.] "I had never before beheld extensive scenery of this kind. The many descriptions of the prairies of the west had forestalled in some measure the first impressions produced by the magnificent landscape that lay spread out before me as far as the eye could reach, bounded alone by the blue wall of the sky. No description, however, which I have read of these scenes, or which can be written, can convey more than a faint impression to the imagination of their effects upon the eye. The view of the illimitable succession of green undulations and flowery slopes, of every gentle and graceful configuration, stretching away and away, until they faded from the sight in



*Above: Swale visible on the Blue Prairie in Southeast Kansas City, Missouri*

the dim distance, creates a wild and scarcely controllable ecstasy of admiration. I felt, I doubt not, some of the emotions natural to the aboriginal inhabitants of these boundless and picturesque plains, when roving with unrestrained freedom over them; and careless alike of the past and the future, luxuriating in the blooming wilderness of sweets which the Great Spirit had created for their enjoyment, and placed at their disposal.

"The soil of these prairies is of the most inexhaustibly fertile composition, being a black loam, usually several feet in depth. Among the flowers which spangle the waves of this ocean of luxuriant vegetation, were the wild pink-verbena, and the wild indigo, with a blue bean-like blossom. The larkspur, and myriads of smaller flowers, ornament the velvety carpet of grass. . . .

"At two o'clock, we reached an encampment, composed of the wagons of Colonel Russell and the family of Mr. West, of Calloway County, Mo., and some others. They were emigrating to California. . . .

"A log-house, the residence of a Mr. Milliron, an emigrant to this country

from Virginia, was situated about half a mile from our encampment. We visited the house soon after we encamped. The family, consisting Mr. and Mrs. M., and several sons and daughters, have resided here, on the outskirts of civilization, four years. They have annually been afflicted with the prevailing sickness of the country (the fever and ague), except their eldest daughter, a very fair-skinned, handsomely-featured and graceful young woman. In a field not far from the house, one of the sons of Mr. M., with a horse-team, was plowing up the ground. I followed the plow several times backwards and forwards, and I never saw a soil indicative of a higher degree of fatness, or more productive qualities. . . .

"We were now on the line which divides savage life and civilization. A few miles further, and we shall pass beyond the incorporated territories of the United States into the countries inhabited by the untutored tribes of the wilderness. But notwithstanding such is our position, the scenery around us presents greater pastoral charms than I have witnessed in the oldest and most

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densely populated districts of the United States; houses alone are wanting to render the landscape perfect. It would seem as if in mockery of the puny efforts and circumscribed results of the labors of man to ornament the landscape by art and cultivation, the power and taste of Omnipotence had here been manifested, preparing for his children a garden as illimitable in extent as it is perfect, grand, and picturesque in appearance."

It would have been very difficult even for Edwin Bryant to imagine that in the late twentieth century, a massive shopping center (Bannister Mall) would envelope the 40 acre parcel of land owned by Milliron, as well as adjoining tracts of real estate both to the north and south.

Both Bryant's and Colonel William H. Russell's wagons resumed their march. With the "Blue Creek" (Big Blue River) just four miles distance on the Santa Fe Trail, the emigrant wagon train then proceeded to depart the quintessential "Blue Prairie" of nineteenth-century Jackson County, Missouri.

During the 1840s, several new campsites for both the Santa Fe traders and California-Oregon emigrants came into being on the Blue Prairie.

This, the Blue Prairie, just to the southwest of present-day Raytown, Missouri, enjoys, to this very day, some of the most pristine remnants of the Santa Fe Trail.

To the 19th-century emigrant passing through the magnificent Blue Prairie in the springtime, it must have seemed as if here the Almighty had erected a finished abode for his rational creatures, and therewith ornamented it with beauties of landscape and exuberance and variety of production far above mankind's feeble conceptions or efforts at imitation.

According to Edwin Bryant, the general reason assigned for emigration to the Pacific, by those from the frontier settlements of Illinois and Missouri, was the extreme unhealthiness of those districts. They stated that during the summer and autumnal months they were afflicted with the ague and fever; and of late years, in the winter season, the

## CHAPTER WORKS ON COOPERATION WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

In the spirit of a cooperative effort to preserve and enjoy the trails, Utah Crossroads Chapter invited state and federal government officials to be speakers at the general membership meeting in April. Realizing that only a unity of purpose and understanding between OCTA and the government agencies that oversee sections of the trails going west can protect these trails, Crossroads members were anxious to hear from government spokesmen. The group was privileged to hear from John Knudson, trails coordinator with the Utah Division of Parks and Recreation; Glenn Foreman, the Public Affairs Officer from the Bureau of Land Management; and Michael J. Duwe from the Division of Planning and Compliance, Rocky Mountain Region of the National Park Service.

John Knudson presented an excellent slide-illustrated talk about the Rails to Trails program in Utah. The trail runs



congestive fever prevailed, and sometimes it was so fatal in its ravages so as to nearly depopulate whole neighborhoods. The diurnal condensation of dampness, and the great difference between the temperature of the day and the night, were doubtless strong agents producing the prevailing diseases of this country—the ague and bilious fevers—and remained so well into the twentieth century.

Having first moved to the scenic crested ridge of the Blue Prairie with my parents in May, 1944, in the 8400 block of Blue Ridge, the early years of our residence provided us with a breathtaking view of the wide-open prairie, dotted with a few farm and residential structures and widely-scattered groves of native trees and isolated orchards. I am daily reminded of the rich history which was carved into the luxuriant soil of the Blue Prairie by both the Santa Fe traders and the California-Oregon emigrants.

from Park City to Echo Junction and is for non-motorized traffic. Besides providing recreation, the old railroad trail gives people a chance to learn history by walking where history happened.

Glenn Foreman spoke on the working partnership the Bureau of Land Management has with Crossroads and OCTA. The BLM is working conscientiously with many historical groups in the preparations for National Trails Day. He has been helpfully involved in trails preserving efforts, such as the California and Mormon Trails, the Pony Express route, and the transcontinental railroad route.

The evening's final speaker was Michael Duwe of the National Park Service. He supervises the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. The National Park Service has made and continues to make many contributions to the preservation and development of the trails system, including comprehensive management planning, mapping, marking, devising auto-tour routes, placing and maintaining interpretive panels, writing and distributing resource materials, researching and monitoring sites.

Keeping clear channels of communication open is the key to a successful partnership between the private sector and government agencies. The April meeting was a step in a very positive direction. Lyndia Carter

### COED OPEN!

For those members who have been waiting to access the COED database, it is now open to you as an OCTA member. New information will continue to be added, of course.

The last two pages of this newsletter contain the information you need to send for a search.

**GOOD LUCK!!**



COED is a registered trademark of the Oregon-California Trails Association

# Census of Overland Emigrant Documents



COED now has more than 1200 documents and 40,000 names in the database! These figures have more than doubled since the trial COED name searches held last year in July.

Because of this, the Central COED Committee has decided to open the database officially (NOT another trial run) to OCTA MEMBERS ONLY beginning in July 1993. The following page contains an inquiry form for you to use to request your name search.

OCTA MEMBERS ONLY will receive a special rate of \$8.00 PER SURNAME requested and a single \$2.00 charge for postage and handling, one or more searches submitted together.

There is no time limit on these requests as before. We will begin to answer requests as soon as they start coming in. Please allow several weeks to receive your response back.

Complete your request form (use a separate one for each surname requested) and send it along with your check payable to OCTA at:

COED Name Search  
Oregon-California Trails Association  
P.O. Box 1019  
Independence, MO 64051-0519

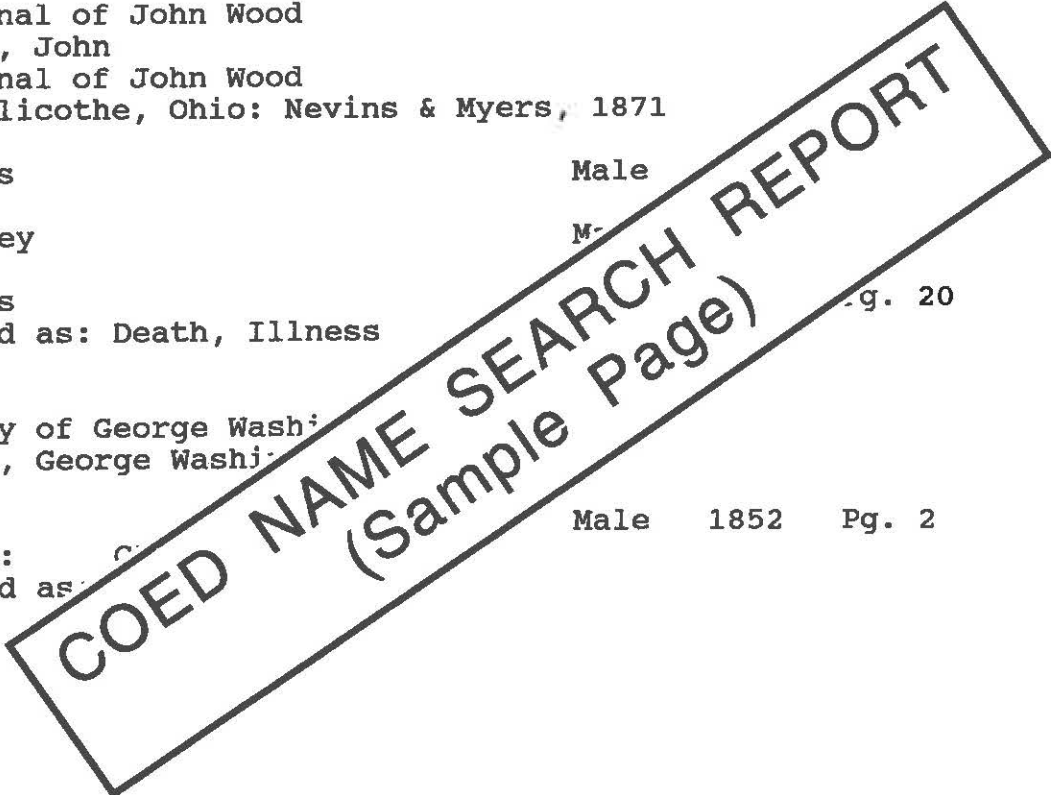
NS-93 5-21-93

Document: Journal of John Wood  
Author: Wood, John  
Published: Journal of John Wood  
Chillicothe, Ohio: Nevins & Myers, 1871

Dixson, Ellis	Male	
Dixson, Kelley	M-	
Dixson, Ellis		g. 20
Cited as: Death, Illness		

Document: Diary of George Washi  
Author: Call, George Washi

Dixon, James	Male	1852	Pg. 2
From:			
Cited as:			





Census of Overland  
Emigrant Documents

Request For  
NAME SEARCH

COED is a registered trademark of the  
Oregon-California Trails Association

ONLY ONE SURNAME PER FORM

Person You Are Searching For:

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Male  Female

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

*The actual search will be for the surname only, since some citations may not include a first name. However, please give us the first name so we can keep our records complete. Searches are phonetic, and will report names that sound like the name requested but may be spelled differently.*

What years should the search cover (5 years maximum)? 18 \_\_\_\_ through 18 \_\_\_\_

Did this person participate in the overland emigration?  Yes  No  ?

If "Yes," please provide the following information:

Year on Trail: 18 \_\_\_\_  ?

Left from (home): State: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Destination: State: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Died on trail?  Yes  No  ?      Born on trail?  Yes  No  ?

Do you have or know of an unpublished document (diary, reminiscence, letters, etc.) written by or about the emigrant you are searching for? Another emigrant? Please describe on back.  Yes  No

How do you know that the person you are looking for participated in the overland emigration?

- Diary, letters, or reminiscence.
- Newspaper accounts.
- Other (please describe on back)
- Family oral history.
- Family bible.

FEEES

*Make your check payable to the Oregon-California Trails Association. Send completed form and check to:*

*COED Name Search  
Oregon-California Trails Association  
P.O. Box 1019  
Independence, MO 64051-0519*

*Fees are \$10 per surname. OCTA members receive a \$2 discount. Shipping and handling is \$2 per request (one or more searches submitted together).*

Name Searches: \_\_\_\_\_

Shipping & Handling: 2.00

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

REQUESTOR

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you an OCTA member?  Yes  No

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

NS-02 5-21-93

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